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LETTER DATED 24 FEBRUARY 1993 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I.
OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF YUGOSLAVIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit, enclosed herewith, the letter of His Excellency, Mr. Ilija Djukic, Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, addressed to you.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as the official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dragomir DJOKIC
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Annex

Letter dated 23 February 1993 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia addressed to the President of the Security Council

We have been formally informed that the US Government intends to undertake airdrops of humanitarian assistance into areas of Eastern Bosnia. Since there is no Security Council resolution on this subject, the United States Government states that Security Council resolution 770 provides a legal basis for such a decision. The US Government claims that this is a supplemental, temporary emergency effort. At the same time, the US warned the Yugoslav Army not to disrupt and respond in any way to this relief action, although it is well known that the Yugoslav Army units are not present in the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina and that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is not a party to the civil war going on there. We have also been advised that the airdrops will begin by the end of this week. Furthermore, these airdrops are viewed by the United States as no substitute for relief convoys but as a supplemental, limited and temporary emergency operation.

In this regard, I should like to point out, Mr. President, that the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has always had a positive attitude towards sending humanitarian assistance into war zones. This support for the relief operation have been brought to your attention too, either directly or through UNHCR. This is a lasting and firm position of my Government.

However, I cannot but call your attention, Mr. President, to the fact that we have received the information about airdropped humanitarian assistance in Eastern Bosnia with some concern.

The fact that we support all forms of the delivery of relief supplies to the desperate population of all warring sides does not prevent us and release from responsibility to say that this decision by the US Government is an announcement of a risky and unilateral operation. It does not have, in our judgement, the necessary legal authority under the adopted Security Council resolutions and that the potential risk will be increased short of full coordination with the United Nations. In the carrying out of this operation, many unintended incidents might occur, some of which may not be accidental but may entail the desire to provoke and spill-over the war at a time when one of the belligerencies in Bosnia-Herzegovina is openly advocating the continuation of the war, namely the Moslem side and the Government of Alija Izetbegović.

As you know, General Morillon, commander of UNPROFOR forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina, has also warned of possible serious consequences of this decision in his public statement. As a Government which is doing all it can to promote peace and the peace-keeping plans drawn up by the Co-Chairmen of the London (Geneva) Conference as soon as possible, we wish to stress that the US action, as planned, would constitute a precedent that could have some very

negative and grave, though possibly unintended, implications for the completion of the process of negotiation which has made some progress recently, partly also because of the positions and policies adopted by the Government of the FRY. I wish further to point out, Mr. President, that the FR of Yugoslavia cannot be held responsible for incidents which might take place over Bosnia-Herzegovina in the wake of the US decision on air relief. The likelihood of such incidents is more realistic in the light of the past unpleasant experiences.

We take note with pleasure of the assurances from the US Government that airdrops will not be directed against continued delivery of aid through land convoys. I must, however, voice my fear that the decision might impede relief supplies to reach the suffering populations of all the three communities and religions in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as delivered by UNHCR, ICRC and other humanitarian organizations. Welcoming and supporting the efforts made by the international community to send humanitarian assistance to the communities in need, Yugoslavia itself has shipped its aid irrespective of the nationality of the population and even though it has over 600,000 refugees on its territory. It is offering these refugees the best assistance possible in conditions, as you know, of unjust and unwarranted sanctions imposed on it by the international community as a result of the civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In view of the fact that the shipment of aid has been improved over the past few days, even into the besieged areas of Bosnia-Herzegovina, I would like to underscore the need, Mr. President, to re-examine the purposefulness of undertaking an essentially risky operation based on the decision of the US Government to airdrop relief supplies, for all our appreciation of its humanitarian motives.

It goes without saying that the Government of the FRY, in accordance with its declared policy, does not want to take part in the Bosnian civil war through military action, nor has it undertaken any such action beyond its borders. This is fully in accord with our policy ever since the outbreak of the war. Accordingly, the Yugoslav Army will not interfere with the announced airdrops under the decision of the President and Government of the United States of America. It is understood that this is based on the premise that either the territory or the airspace of the FRY will not be intruded upon. We take note in this context of the assurances received from the American side that this will not happen.

Any analysis made by the Council regarding airdrops of humanitarian assistance in the war zones of Bosnia-Herzegovina will, I believe, Mr. President, lead to the unavoidable conclusion that to deliver aid in the usual way, namely through UNHCR and ICRC, would be much more suitable and greater in size than to provide it by airdrops.

Everything getting in the way of the aid reaching its destinations should be most widely condemned. I, as a representative of the Government which is earnestly trying to promote peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina, would feel discomfort, Mr. President, if I would not convey to you my Government's and my

own apprehensions regarding the airdrops decision of which we have just received formal notification from the US Government.

Confident that the Council, with your personal support, Mr. President, will have full understanding for such concerns and positions on our part.

(Signed) Ilija DJUKIĆ